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EAST AND WEST SERIES

No. 81 November, 1963

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GURU NANAK : GOD-INTOXICATED

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EAST AND WEST SERIES

[Monthly]

An Interpreter of the Life of the Spirit

9/235

GURU NANAK : GOD-INTOXICATED

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I have now been receiving copies of "East and West Series" for some years and have found the articles very interesting and uplifting,

I have the greatest admiration and respect for your revered Teacher and wish I were able to meet him personally.

Although my spiritual work keeps me busy, I usually find time to read each edition of "East and West" from cover to cover, and not only do I find much wisdom and comfort in the words of the Master but am greatly helped in my comparative study of world religions. I have always felt much drawn to the teachings of the East.

I trust, therefore, that your work of spreading the teachings of your Master may continue to prosper and expand. And may he be spared for years yet to lead man from the darkness of materialism into the light of the Spirit.

Arthur H. Kings
Leader, Sanctuary of St. Francis of Assisi, Middlesex, England

Revered Vaswaniji has, for years, contributed to the spiritual rapproachment between the Orient and the Occident. And I am sure that under his luminous lead and with the ardent cooperation of our rising generation, your "East and West" will fulfil a great mission.

Dr. Kalidas Nag,
Calcutta

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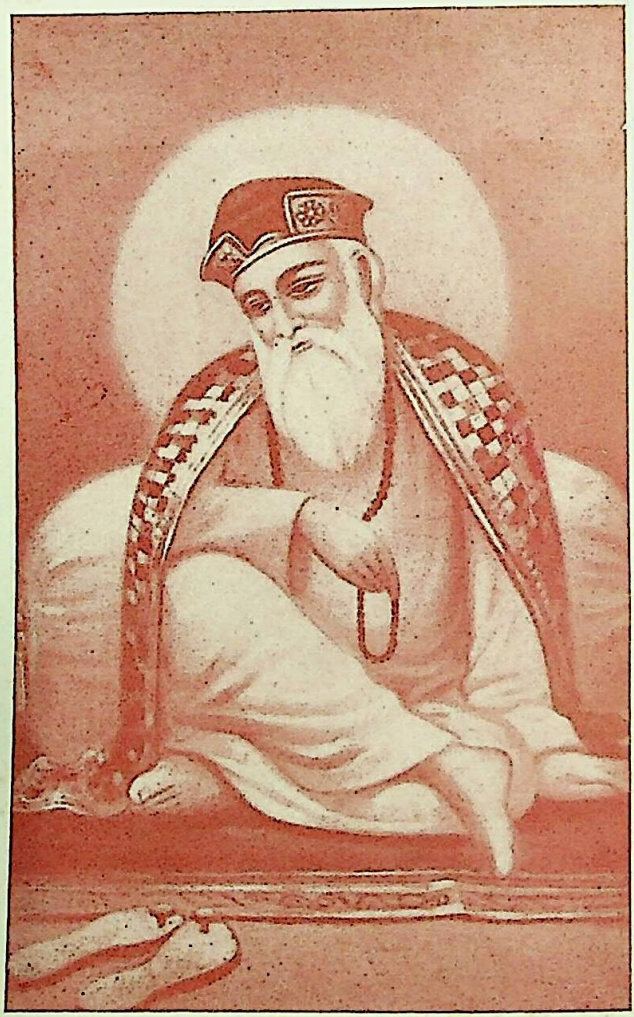

GURU NANAK

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INTRODUCTION

Five centuries have sped since he came. His century did not know aright the great Guru. If he came back to us, today, the twentieth century would not know him aright.

Guru Nanak is the glory of India. After him, the great Khalsa built a number of states. But India has not yet known aright the message of the great Guru. Alien still to many are the life and teaching of the Guru.

"How many Gods are there really, O Yagnavalkya ?"

"Six," answered the Rishi.

"Yes," he said, and asked again :—"How many Gods are there really, O Yagnavalkya ?"

"Three," he said.

"Yes," he said, and asked again :—"How many Gods are there really, O Yagnavalkya?"

"One," he said.

"*Eko Onkar*," said Guru Nanak. "And His Name is *Sat Kartar!*" *Sat Kartar!* The True One is He! The One Spirit is He!

This One liveth the life of Blessedness,—said Nanak. And, in a hymn of exquisite beauty, Nanak spoke of the One Father-Mother of the universe as the "Ruler" of all. "Zeus," the singer of ancient Greece called Him. Full of Zeus are all the streets and all the markets of men. And Krishna said that we all are notes in the one "Flute" of the Divine Singer. The King of kings is He, the Light of lights! "And sun and moon and stars and flowers and jewels are flung forth by Him!"

In a village named Talwandi,—thirty miles from Lahore, —in the year 1469, is born this Child of Light. It is a moonlight night. And heavenly music, we read, greets

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the coming of the infant to the Earth.

Stories, as sweet as those of the "shepherds" and the "wise men" of the East, who pay homage to Jesus on his birth in a stable, are told us, in the ancient books in regard to the birth, toward morning, of a moonlight spring night, of Nanak,—a servant of the Beloved. Saints and heroes, sages and bearded, old men come to pay homage to this child of light, who is destined to be a Singer and a Teacher, —a Singer whose song of *Sat Nama* is the life and inspiration of sages.

Nanak's mother is named Tripta : full of devotion is she to God and full of tender affection for her son,—Nanak. His father is Kalu,—a merchant, a farmer, an accountant, manager of the land belonging to a Muslim Rajput, Rai Bular,—the feudal lord of Talwandi.

In a dark hour of our history appears Nanak. We have a picture of India's state in those days in the following words of Guru Nanak :—

Kings are butchers : cruelty is their weapon.
The sense of duty has taken wings and vanished.
Falsehood moves over the land,—as a veil
Of darkness,—the darkness of the darkest night!
The moon of splendour shineth not.
Starless is the night!

The other day, I wrote in my "Diary" :—

Democracies have failed : but Democracy lives. It will triumph in the day two things are achieved :—(1) when sectarianisms and fanaticisms perish form the Earth, and (2) when states will bow down in reverence to a Law superior to theirs,—the Law of Fellowship and Sympathy,—and to the Infinite whose voice rings from end to end :—Children of the Earth ! ye all are one!"

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This two-fold truth Nanak came to re-proclaim. Guru Nanak is not the monopoly of the Sikh Community, nor of India. He belongs to all. He belongs to the world. For he bore witness to One God, to One Brotherhood, to the One Law of Fellowship and Love. He came to reconcile religions. He came to harmonise scriptures. He came to announce the Ancient Truth, the *Yoga* of the Ages, that One Wisdom is eloquent in all prophets and sages, and that one Love doth shine in all the shrines and sacraments of man. I have asked myself, again and again :—"In the day of her political freedom, will India lose the vision of her holy Rishis and Sages? And will she, turning to the West, adopt its 'religion of riches,' its faith in gold?"

Guru Nanak's life and teaching revolutionised the minds and hearts of millions. Young India needs his inspiration, today, in the task of re-building the Nation : for India's freedom is yet incomplete.

A lover of freedom, Guru Nanak spent his early days in the freedom of the farm and village life : and in his days of manhood he travelled far and wide. He went about blessing all, asking all to free their minds and hearts of convention and cant. As I have meditated on his words and reviewed the main incidents of his life as related in the *Janmasakhi*, I have felt, more strongly than before, that India's Freedom may not be achieved without the power of faith and solidarity and service of humanity,—faith more than the knowledge of books, solidarity more than schemes of "reform," service of humanity more than anything else.

And concerning these three, the Guru's life has not a little to tell us. Taken to a school-master, this great soul, great in humility and love, asks :—"Sir, what have you learnt?"

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And the school-master says he has learnt all the branches of knowledge, has read the books, has known arithmetic and book-keeping, has known everything!

Then says Nanak to the school-master :—"Is that kind of learning useful, sir?" And in a passage of great beauty and wisdom, Nanak sings the very secret of education :—

Burn worldly thoughts and their ashes rub and of these
ashes make thy ink :
And let the paper on which you write be the paper of faith:
Let your heart be the pen:
Then write the Name and the praise thereof,—
And write without end or limit !

The current system of education in India ignores the wise injunction :—"Let your heart be the pen : then write the Name!" Let your heart be the pen. Then write the Name,—the Mother's Name,—in the ink made of *tapasya*: and you will write in flaming letters the freedom of Hindustan.

And who more than the Guru bore witness to the brotherhood of man? The first words he utters, waking from his trance in the waters, are :—"There is no Hindu and no Mussalman!" Speaking, on another occasion, to the Hindus, he says :—"Praise and glorify Allah as Muslims do five times daily." Speaking to the Muslims, he says:—"Make the Will of Allah your rosary." "A real Mussalman is he who has renounced self." Is it a wonder the Muslims cried aloud :—"*Khuda* (God) is speaking to us in Nanak"? Is it a wonder, when he passed away, both Hindus and Muslims covered his body with flowers? And the old chronicle says :—"All the flowers were fresh!"

The Guru goes to Mecca. He teaches there the doctrine of the One. He interprets there the wisdom of the prophets. He utters the name, "Allah," with reverence,

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as he does the name, "Hari." On meeting him, Sheikh Farid greets him with the words :—"Allah, O Dervish !" And to this the Guru replies :—"Allah is the aim of all my efforts, O Farid ! Allah is the backbone of my being !" Sheikh Farid, the Muslim Pir, becomes a friend of Guru Nanak : and the Sikh scriptures include songs of Farid which mention the name of Allah.

"There is no caste," says the Guru. "We claim brotherhood with all." So it is that every member of the Sikh community is a *bhai*. All are *bhais*, brothers, whether kings or warriors or preachers or students of science and literature. "Nor caste, nor birth is asked at the holy house of the Lord," says the Guru. He mingles freely with the poor and neglected ones. He accepts their invitation in preference to those of rich men who, he knows, invite him for self-glorification. There is, I have often said, but one sin. It is the sin of separateness. It is the sin against the solidarity of life and the brotherhood of man.

This prophet of unity sees the higher harmony of all faiths in the One Religion, which is the worship of God and service of the God-in-man. Asked at Mecca, if he was a Hindu or a Muslim, he says he is neither; he discerns God in both. Asked which is superior, Hinduism or Islam, he says :—"Without good acts, the professors of both will perish!" In one of his hymns, we read :—"To him, whose delusion of the heart is gone, Hindu and Mussalman are the same." At Baghdad, they ask him to which sect he belongs. He replies :—"I have renounced all sects. I only know the one God who is in the earth, the heavens, and all directions."

He accepts a Muslim as his beloved disciple,—Mardana. And to him the Guru has dedicated three *slokas* to be found in the *Granth Sahib*. Again and again, he warns his disciples against the sin of separateness. In a beautiful passage he sings :—

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"Numberless are Thy worshippers and numberless Thy lovers. Numberless Thy *bhaktas* who lovingly fix their thoughts on Thee. Thy musical instruments and sounds are many, and innumerable are Thy musicians."

He also asks them to accept spiritual disciplines, *sadhanas*, without which there is no freedom. One discipline is, devotion to the Name. In the very opening line of the *Japji* is the word, "*Sat Nama*," the Name of the Eternal Verity. In the Name is rooted the life of religion. "Sow the Name," says the Guru, "sow the Name. Now is the season to throw away all doubt and fear." "Burn to ashes your silk and velvet, if they draw you away from the Name of the Lord."

The *sadhana* of which the Guru speaks is, in the second place, *tahal*, *seva*, the service of man. In many ways does the Guru speak of the supreme value of *tahal*, service. Is not his life a luminous commentary on the meaning of service? How many Kauda rakshas and Sajjan thugs did he not redeem during his missionary expeditions! Imprisoned in 1526, the Guru spends his time in jail in reforming the thieves and singing to them the Name of the Lord. Service is the *sadhana* which the Guru enjoins on every one of his disciples.

Yet another *sadhana* is *bhakti*,—the culture of emotions. The Guru sings :—

"Teach me how to live immersed in Thy meditation, day and night.

"Grant, O Lord, that I may never think of aught save Thee, and that I may sing of Thee, ever and ever!"

Again :—

"O my heart! love God as the lotus loves the water.

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> The more it is beaten by the waves, the more its love is excited : having received its life in water, it dies without water.
>
> "O my heart! love God as the *chatrak* loves the rain, who even when fountains are full and the land green, is not satisfied as long as it cannot get a drop of rain."

Again :—

> "Whichever side I cast mine eyes, there Thou art!
> Parted from Thee I burst and die!"

As I have recalled incident after incident of his life, I have sometimes said to myself :—"O, that I had the privilege his first disciples had of hearing his wondrous words and seeing the sacred beauty of his Lotus-face and kissing his blessed feet!" Then a nobler thought comes to me and I say to myself :—"Alas! I forget that he has passed into the Unseen only to come nearer to us in spirit. He has gone away in order to enter into us, into the life of India, the life of the world. Is he not still our Leader and our Light?"

A beautiful Sikh belief has it that the one light passed into other Gurus. And may I be permitted to say that the one light has never vanished? It is in each one of us. Only let us break the barriers of passion and prejudice, of separateness, sectarianism and strife. Only let us remove the obstacles, so that the light may shine with splendour. India needs the Light : the nations need the Light : civilisation needs the Light. And the Light shines through everyone who radiates love. Guru Nanak's call is a call to us all,—of sympathy, compassion and love!

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GURU NANAK : GOD-INTOXICATED*

NELSON and Napoleon, Lenin and Hitler are heroes of the West. Our heroes are of a different type, are made in a different mould. Our heroes are mystics and saints and their true, devoted disciples,—men who have built their manhood in the inner values of life. Guru Nanak is one of the mightiest heroes of Indian history.

The secret of his life I express in this one word :—"God-intoxicated." The love of God filled and made fragrant every fibre of the Guru's being.

Guru Nanak appeared in 1469, and the great one passed on in 1539. For 70 years he stayed upon this earth. Very often I refer to this earth as a dark planet. It is a plane of conflict and contradiction. On this planet you find evil forces gathering strength and fighting the good. On this dark planet appeared Guru Nanak in the fifteenth century. In that period of our history, Baber's army was marching on, but Baber himself had great respect for *fakirs* and *dervishes*. And for Guru Nanak, Baber had reverence.

When Baber comes to know that the great one has been sent to prison, Baber orders the release of Guru Nanak. Then Baber comes into personal contact with the great one. Historians of the period, whether Hindu or Muslim, all agree in telling us that Baber came under the influence of Guru Nanak. There is one important declaration of Guru Nanak referred to as *Nasihatnama*. In this declaration the great teacher gives advice to the Moghul King.

Baber sees a little of Guru Nanak's life and is deeply struck with the radiance of the Guru's face. And the Moghul king says to the *fakir* of God :—"Instruct me!" And Guru

* From an address delivered on Guru Nanak's Birthday.

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Nanak gives a number of instructions. There are two instructions specially emphasised by Guru Nanak. The great one says to the Moghul king :—"Worship God every day; and be kind to every one." It was under the influence of Guru Nanak that Baber ordered the release of several prisoners in the jail in Aminabad.

Guru Nanak went, from place to place, carrying with him a strange, magnetic influence. Guru Nanak influenced the princes, and he influenced the peasants. Guru Nanak, before he went out as a teacher to different parts, spent much time in meditation. Over and over again, Guru Nanak would go to a forest. He would sit there in silence. He would meditate upon the great Mystery that we call life. Is not life a mystery? Whence cometh life? The life-force that works in you, in every one of you,—whence cometh it? The life that floweth into me, the life that sustains you and me every day, whence is it? And sitting in seclusion, in silence, away from the crowds that clamour and so often distract us, sitting in a far-off forest, Guru Nanak meditated upon the mystery of life.

From the beginning of his days, Guru Nanak was a lover of meditation. From the beginning of his days, there was something mystic in his eyes. His mother, one day, looking into his eyes, said to him :—"My child, Nanak! who are you? Your eyes seem to rest upon a Vision." A vision of the great mystery of life was in the eyes of Guru Nanak.

The mother is astonished as she finds her child repeating the Name of God. The father doesn't understand Nanak. The mother understands him. Why? The mother, Tripta, has sympathy. The father, Kalu, has a questioning, critical spirit. Your questioning, your criticism, very often fails to understand. True understanding is born of sympathy. The father looks at his boy, again and again. On more than one occasion, he refers to Nanak as "mad." And one

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day he calls in a *hakim*, a physician. The physician feels the pulse of Nanak. The pulse is beating very well. And Nanak, young Nanak, looking with his innocent, mystical eyes into the face of the physician, says :—"Doctor, I am not mad! They call me mad. I am smitten with the love of God. I am God-intoxicated!"

Kalu, the father, sends him to a school where Hindi is taught. And Nanak says to his teacher, Gopal Panda :—"Sir, what do you teach me, and how do you wish to teach me?" And then Guru Nanak gives a very beautiful talk concerning the secret of education. Nanak says to Gopal Panda :—"Make the heart your pen, and with the pen of love, the pen of the heart, write, again and again, the Name of God." That is education.

Later on, Nanak is sent to a school where Sanskrit is taught. Nanak sits at the feet of Pandit Brijnath. And Brijnath, at the start of his instructions, asks Nanak to utter the word, "Om!"

Nanak asks :—"What is Om?"

The Pandit cannot explain it.

Then Nanak, the boy, gives a beautiful talk on the inner philosophy of Om. Nanak says, Om is *Shakti*. The great *Shakti* (Power) that sustains the universe, he says, is the love of God. Over and over again, does Nanak sing of the love of God.

Love of God and love of man are the very heart of the message of Guru Nanak. What infinite love was in the heart of the Blessed One! How tenderly he loved the poor! We who speak so loudly, in these days, of service of the poor,—I wished we sat at the feet of the great Guru to learn of him what it is to serve the poor gently, in the spirit of true *bhakti*. In much of what we call *seva* or service, today, there is the sound of the trumpet. We need to learn to serve the poor gently, quietly, unostentatiously.

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His father opens a little shop for Nanak. The father says to him :—"Nanak, you are doing nothing. I open this little shop for you. Go there every day." Nanak goes to the shop and, on the very first day, what does he do? He finds there are some poor persons, and he distributes provisions among them. What a beautiful love was in his heart!

Nanak's father has given to Bala Rs. 20 to purchase provisions for the shop. "See," says the father to Bala, "that the shop grows, and see that Nanak doesn't throw away his money." Bala goes with Nanak. On the way, Nanak sees some poor persons : what does he do? He tells Bala :— "Go and bring me flour. You have Rs. 20 with you; spend the amount in the purchase of flour." And Guru Nanak gives all the flour thus purchased to the poor.

Where are such servants of the poor, today? We live in difficult days: yet more difficult days are in store for us. I know, as perhaps many of you know not, how families are starving, today. Where are they, true servants of the poor who would go and help the starving families?

Wherever Guru Nanak went, he carried love in his heart,— love for God and love for man. When he served the poor, remember, he saw God's image in the poor. In the old man tottering on his crutches and asking for alms, in the broken widow lying on a bed of illness in her cottage, uncared for, unlooked for, in the orphan, the destitute, the sick ones, Guru Nanak saw the living pictures of the Lord!

Guru Nanak Dev travels to many places. He feels he must go and share with others his vision, his inspiration, his wisdom, and so he goes from place to place. He goes to Kurukshetra where, in the long ago, the great historic battle was fought between the Pandavas and the Kauravas. Kurukshetra, too, is the place where Sri Krishna gave his Great

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Revelation enshrined in the Gita. From Kurukshetra he passes on to Hardwar,—the place regarded as a meeting point of many saints and sages. From Hardwar the Guru goes to Brindaban, the place where Child Krishna played his wondrous *leela* of love.

From Brindaban, Guru Nanak goes to Banaras,—Kashi,—the holy place of Hinduism. Kashi, the place of learning and scholarship, was, also, the place of piety and inspiration. And in the days of which I speak to you, Kashi had become a centre of a mighty inspiration. There, in Kashi, in the Guru's days, lived a saint, the great mystic, the great singer, the great teacher, the great weaver-saint of India,—Kabir. Guru Nanak goes to Banaras, and a beautiful tradition has it that Guru Nanak meets Kabir. It must have been a blessed meeting! When a saint meets a saint, there is the descent of the Holy Spirit: the very earth is blessed.

Guru Nanak proceeds further. He moves on to other places. He moves on to Agra, which was then a centre of Muslim culture. Guru Nanak understood Islam and Muslim ideals better than many of the Muslims of his days. He goes to Agra and he goes to Ayodhya, the place fragrant with wondrous associations,—Ayodhya, the place of Sri Ramachandra. Guru Nanak goes further on. He goes to Patna, which was,at one time, the biggest centre of Buddhist culture,—Patna, where reigned the king of blessed memory, Ashoka. Ashoka, the *fakir*, sat on the throne of a great empire and ruled in the spirit of a true disciple of the Buddha.

Guru Nanak proceeds further to Jagannath Puri,—a place of pilgrimage to many. Guru Nanak goes through Bengal, the place of Vaishnava culture. Guru Nanak goes to the Deccan, the place of the great saints of Maharashtra.

Guru Nanak then crosses the limits of India. The great Guru goes to Ceylon, the land of the great saint, Mahinda, son of Ashoka, who left his claim to his father's throne,

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saying to him :—"Father! I fain would be a *fakir* for the sake of my Master. I want no throne. I want no wealth of the world. I seek the treasures of the Spirit at the feet of the Buddha!" And so Mahinda went over to Ceylon and there spread the message of the Buddha. To this land, the land of St. Mahinda, Guru Nanak goes.

From Ceylon the great Guru goes to Burma. From Burma he goes over to Siam. The great Guru goes to Kabul and Kandhar. Yes, the Guru goes to Turkey. He goes to Mecca and Medina. He comes in contact with different types of culture and sympathy. The great Guru meets a number of Muslims. He travels from place to place : he travels in the spirit of a pilgrim, and every where he goes with love in his heart,—love for God and love for man.

WHAT is the message of the great one? What message does Guru Nanak take, from place to place, to many lands,—to the cities and villages in and outside India? What message does he give to the people,—to Hindus and to Muslims he comes in contact with? "Revere all saints and prophets," he says. You and I need this teaching, today. Have reverence for all saints and prophets. This is the first great teaching of the Guru. He, also, teaches this :—Love God and love the poor! Love, says the great Guru, is God Himself!

There is a beautiful story told us of how, when Guru Nanak goes to Multan, the *fakirs* there come to know of it. Multan was then a place full of many *fakirs*. And they say :—"Who is this new *fakir* and why is he come? There are many *fakirs* already in this city. Why is fakir Nanak come to us?"

What do they do? They call a man and, to him, they

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give a cup brimful of milk. The cup is brought by the man to Nanak. The man says :—"*Fakir!* this cup comes to you from the *fakirs* of Multan!"

And Guru Nanak smiles and puts some sugar in the milk, and on the top of the milk he places a flower. Then says the Guru to the man :—"Take back this cup to the *fakirs* who kindly sent it to me!"

The saints do not quarrel. We, little ones, quarrel,—we who talk of "reform," forgetting that we must first reform ourselves. The way of the saints is a gentle way. The saints teach in love.

Guru Nanak tells the man :—"Take back this cup to the *fakirs* who so kindly sent it to me." And the bearer of the cup takes it away.

Mardana is staying with the Guru. Mardana, the Mussalman, whom the great Guru took with him on his travels far and wide, so showing, in practical life, in daily life, that the Muslims were so dear to him. Mardana says to Guru Nanak :—"Master! Why did you return the cup? They sent it to you, why did you not keep it?"

The Master says to Mardana:—"Look here, my child. They sent me milk. It was kind of them. But milk is a symbol of strength. You drink milk to become strong. But mere strength is not enough. Strength gives you courage, strength gives you manhood, it is true. But you need something more than strength. That is sweetness, and sugar is a symbol of sweetness." "And something more than sweetness is needed," said Guru Nanak. "Fragrance is needed. So I put a little flower on the top of the cup. Strength is needed, sweetness is needed, and fragrance is needed. And all these three constitute love. The spirit of love is needed."

Who is the man of true love? He has strength. So the great English poet, in the very opening stanza in his great

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book, *In Memoriam*, says :—"Strong son of God! Immortal Love!" Oh love! thou art strong! Thou art the "strong son" of God. Love has strength. Love has courage. In the measure in which we lose courage and strength, in that measure we lose love. True love is strong, true love is fearless. But love is sweet, also. Love is strong, but 'tis not proud. Love is strong, but will not do harm. Love is sweet. And, thirdly, the life of him who is filled with love is fragrant. We say we go about to serve the poor, but see how proud we are! See how showy we become! See how fond we are of ostentation! See how we talk to the poor,—how arrogantly! There is not the fragrance of humility in our life. Guru Nanak says, he who has love in his heart has humility. These are the three marks of the true spirit of love.

I could go on giving you incident after incident taken from the life of the great one, but my time has travelled fast. There are two main aspects of the great Guru's message which I have left untouched. One is *Hukum*,—the Will of God. The Guru refers to it in *Sri Jap Sahib*, again and again. What did the Guru mean by *Hukum*? The Divine Will. Guru Nanak understood Islam, as very few have understood it. He understood that the very heart of Islam was the doctrine of the Will of God. The meaning, the radical meaning, of the word "Islam" is "surrender" to the Will of God,—surrender to the Divine Will. And Guru Nanak has developed the docrine of the Divine Will in a wonderful way. But I have not the time, today, to unfold this part of his teaching.

The second important aspect of his message is the Five Stages through which the seeker must go in order to reach the Highest. Guru Nanak speaks of five stages, five realms.

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Khand is the beautiful word he uses. The first is *Dharam Khand.* Then comes *Gnan Khand.* The third is *Saram Khand,*—the word *saram* being a prakrit form of the Sanskrit word, *swarna,* golden,—the Golden *Khand.* The fourth *khand,* realm, is *Karam Khand. Karam* means grace. The seeker becomes a child of "grace," when he enters this fourth stage. And then, at last, the *jignasu,* the seeker, enters the fifth stage,—*Sach Khand,* where dwells the Eternal Essence. "*Sach Khand Vasai Nirankar.*" These are the five stages in the journey of the *jignasu* concerning which I had hoped to speak tonight, but my time is up already.

This evening I ask you to take in your hearts a picture of the great Guru. He loved the Hindus, but he loved, also, the Muslims. He loved the Muslims, but he loved all men, all races, all communities, all countries. Guru Nanak loved all humanity. He not only loved humanity: he loved, also, birds and beasts.

There is a story told us of how, one day, some Muslims get angry with other Muslims, saying to them :—"Why do you listen to Nanak *fakir*? You are Muslims, why do you listen to him?" Then the Muslims say :—"We listen to this *fakir,* because we feel that God is speaking through him. *Khuda* is speaking through Nanak!"

Do *you* listen to the great Guru? He is speaking still! The great Guru is speaking unto me, he is speaking unto you. Sons and daughters of the Sages of the East! the great Guru is not dead! The great Guru is still alive! And with his living inspiration, he still may touch the heart of him, the heart of her, who would surrender himself, surrender herself, to him. *Khuda* is speaking through him still. He is speaking unto Bharata. The great Master says unto you and unto me :—"Love God! Love all the saints and prophets! And spend yourselves in the service of the poor!"

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THE TEACHER

NANAK is a psychic. In the Ravi river, he plunges for a bath. It is a blessed bath. A Voice speaks to him in the music of the waters :—"Nanak! I am with thee! Repeat My Name : and ask others to repeat My Name. Mingle with men, uncontaminated by the world! Worship, meditate, and serve the poor!"

In the silence of his soul, he knows God by personal contact of the heart with the harmony of the Eternal Self.

He comes out of the waters. His face shines with a strange, unearthly light. Nanak has had a vision of the Spirit whose brightness fills the river, and fills the Sun and stars, and fills the temple of the heart.

It is the first "ecstasy" of Nanak. It fills him and, out of the fullness of his heart, he sings :—

O Lord !
If I had hundreds of thousands of tons of paper,
And if my ink were inexhaustible,
And if my pen moved swift as the rushing wind,
I should still be unable
To articulate all Thou art!

Nanak has a vision of the Infinite. This vision fills him. And, three days later, as he re-appears at his residence, he prepares, in obedience to the vision, to go forth among the people to sing to them the Name of God,—the *Sat-Nama*,—and to ask them all to sing the Name Divine.

Before Nanak moves out on his travels, he gives away absolutely all his possessions to the poor. Jesus asked the rich, young ruler to give all he had to the poor, if he would walk in the way of the Lord: and the young man failed at the test. Guru Nanak obeys the call of his "vision" to the letter,

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and goes out, empty-handed, to give God's great message to the people. "Nanak knoweth none other than God,"—says this humble apostle of the Infinite. And again :—"I only know one God : His way would I indicate unto men."

Nanak realises his kinship with the village-folk, realises that, if he must travel to cities, he must go there as a spiritual physician to cure men and women of diseases of the soul, which the cities breed.

Nanak grows into a vision of spiritual communism. Nanak realises that he has nothing which does not, at the same time, belong to all, that his food and garments he must share with the poor, that the richest privilege of life is to share all you have with all. In the great stress Nanak lays on fellowship and brotherhood, he reveals the secret of true spiritual communism.

Nanak looks on the poor and needy with new eyes of understanding and love : he sees the world lit up with the One Light, from end to end. "*Ishavasyam idam sarvam!*" "All this is covered with the One, as with a garment!" said a Rishi.

Nanak sees the world with new, radiant eyes. Nanak has glimpsed the beauty of the "Kingdom of Heaven." Nanak takes upon himself the yoke of this Kingdom. Nanak prepares to go out to give to men and women, of diverse countries and faiths, the message of the One Father-Mother of all, and of the One Brotherhood radiant with the light of simplicity of living, and adoration and love of the Divine.

Guru Nanak goes out on his travels. Mardana is with him,—yet not he alone. The Angels are with Nanak : for Angels, as a Jewish Rabbi says, "are created, day by day, from the stream of fire." From Nanak flows a "stream of fire." Guru Nanak's song sings of the soul as a "bride" and of God as the "Bridegroom." Guru Nanak's song is charged with the music of Bride and Bridegroom! Guru Nanak sings of spiritual marriage between the soul and God,—sings of a betrothal between the two.

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THE INSPIRED FARMER

GURU Nanak travelled, far and wide. He preached the gospel of the God-life, wherever he went. Some hold that he travelled to Rome and to Russia!

In his four rounds he gave his message to all. These four rounds are called Nanak's four "*yatras*," "pilgrimages" of Guru Nanak. Guru Nanak covered India, Thibet, Ceylon, and Eastern countries dominated by Islam.

In the first round, he visited Kurukshetra, Karnal, Panipat, Hardwar, Delhi, Brindaban, Gorakhmatha, Ayodhya, Lucknow, Banaras, Patna, Gaya, Dacca, Assam, Chittagong and Jagannath Puri. He returned through the Vindhya Mountains, Central India and Rajputana.

In the second round, he visited Bikaner, Ajmer, Pushkar, Abu, Ujjain, Madras, Nagapatam, and Lanka. On his return, he visited Rameshwaram, Dwarka, Kathiawar, Sind, Satghara, Talwandi and Lahore.

In Colombo, Guru Nanak sang a song in answer to the question of the king of Lanka, Raja Shiv Nabh :—"Do you follow the practices of *yogis* or *sanyasins* or monks of some other order?" Mardana played the tune, and the Guru sang :—

When Thou callest me within,
I commune with Thee, O Lord!
In Thy pure Name is my yoga !
In Love of Thee is the end of death
And the end of life!
Who liveth in Thy Word,—
The revelation of the Spirit,—
He riseth above all doubt,

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And remaineth, day and night,
In Thy service!

The Raja listened to the song and wept. *Pran Sangli*,—of which only a fragment remains,—was, also, sung by the Guru in Ceylon.

In Lahore, the Guru met Duni Chand, a wealthy *khatri*. The Guru gave Duni Chand a needle and said :—"Duni Chand, keep it with thee, and give it back to me in the next world!"

And Duni Chand said :—"Master! this needle I cannot carry after death. How can I return it?"

"What use then, Duni Chand, are thy millions to thee?"

And Duni Chand was changed. He spent much of what he had in the service of the poor, and became a devoted disciple of the Guru.

In the third round, he moved on to the Himalayan Mountains and visited the Mansarowar Lake, where he had discourses with the *yogis*. He visited Garwal, Hemakuta, Gorakhpur, Sikkim, Bhutan and Thibet. It is believed that the Guru, also, visited China. He returned through the Kailas Mountains and through Ladakh, Kashmir, Riasi and Jammu. In the Cave Temples in the Mansarowar Lake, you may still see images of Guru Nanak and there are hill-tribes there who worship Guru Nanak, calling him "Bhadra Guru," the "Great Master."

In the fourth round, he travelled to Sind (a second time), Dwarka in Kathiawar, and Mecca and Medina in Arabia. He also visited Baghdad. He travelled, also, to Jerusalem, Damascus and Alleppo. We are told he, also, visited Stambul (Constantinople). Some would have us believe that he, also, visited Egypt or Sudan.

In Mecca, he made the startling statements :—"Is there a place where the House of God is not?" "Narrow is the

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path through which a man must pass who would reach the shrine where shineth the glory of God."

BAGHDAD was, in Nanak's days, a centre of Muslim culture. Baghdad, too, was a homeland of *pirs* and Sufi *fakirs*. Guru Nanak stayed at Baghdad for four months and had talks with some of the holy men of that place. One of them was named Bahlol.

Guru Nanak sat underneath a tree. When asked to speak, the Guru looked at a bird on the tree and said :— "The bird sings a song. The bird sings of the secret of life. Life is service."

"Serve the poor!" said Nanak. When he saw men and women making pilgrimages, he looked at them with loving, compassionate eyes and said :—"*Sat Kartar* (the Truth that is Eternal)! O ye who are moving on pilgrimages! You have the name of God on your lips : but the poor have Him in their hearts. The poor have, in their lives, a holier music than you hear in the shouts and noises in temples!" "Cries" and "clamour" are not what India needs. India needs the chant of true service,—service of the starving multitudes of men, women and children.

Guru Nanak sang of the Infinity of God and His Infinite creation. Bahlol said the *Qura'n* had mentioned "seven earths" and "seven heavens" only. Guru Nanak urged that the universe was not confined to seven earths and seven heavens, but had millions and millions of planets and worlds.

The Guru greeted all in the name of *Sat Kartar*. The Guru disarmed all opposition, and Bahlol and his son were convinced of the truth of the Guru's teaching. Bahlol and his son became *bhaktas* of Guru Nanak and joined Him in adoring God as the Infinite.

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Sri Ananda Acharya was an Indian swami, who travelled to many parts of the world: one of them was Baghdad. He wrote a book, in English, named *Snow Birds*. It is a record of his travels. He settled in Norway,—I am told. This is what he wrote in his *Snow Birds* :—

"(On reading an Arabic inscription in a shrine outside the town of Baghdad) :—

Upon this slab of granite didst thou sit discoursing of love and holy light, O Guru Nanak, Prince among India's holy ones!

What song didst thou sing to charm the soul of Iran? What peace from Himalaya's lonely caves and forests didst thou carry to the groves and rose gardens of Baghdad?

What light from Badrinath's snowy peak didst thou bear to illuminate the heart of Bahlol,—thy saintly Iranian disciple?

Eight fortnights did Bahlol hearken to thy words on Life and its Mystery, on the Path and the Spring Eternal, while the moon waxed and waned in the pomegranate groves beside the grass-covered Desert of the Dead!

And after thou, O Nanak, didst depart for thy beloved Bharat, Bahlol, the *fakir*, spoke to none: he listened not to the voice of man. And his fame spread, far and wide, and the Shah of Iran came to pay him homage : but the holy *fakir* took no earthly treasure nor listened to the praise of kings and courtiers.

Thus lived he,—lonely, devoted, thoughtful,—for sixty years, sitting before the stone on which thy sacred feet had rested.

And ere he left this house of *avidya*, he wrote these words on the stone :—

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'Here spake the Hindu Guru Nanak to *fakir* Bahlol, and for these sixty years, since the Guru left Iran, the soul of Bahlol has rested on the Master's Word, —like a bee poised on a dawnlit honey rose.' "

This place is known to the Arabs of Baghdad as the tomb of Bahlol: and in the centre is a picture of Sri Guru Nanak. On this memorial is an inscription in the Turkish language: and the words are, in English translation, these :—

"Murad saw the demolished building of Hazrat Rab-i-majid, Baba Nanak, Fakir Aulia; and Murad re-built it with his own hands, so that the historic memorial may continue, from generation to generation, and that Baba Nanak's murid-i-s'eed (the blessed disciple) may obtain heavenly bliss."

From Baghdad Guru Nanak returned to the Punjab, after passing through Baku, Persia, Turkestan, Kabul and Peshawar. A Gurudwara still stands in Kabul and is associated with the name of Guru Nanak.

With the mighty power of love he blessed all he met and all he saw,—flowers and trees and birds and beasts, sunrise and sunset on the hills. Love he gave to all,—love to all creation, to men and women and children of all creeds, of all countries. And as he sang his songs of love, the songs of birds blended their notes with his adoration of the one Infinite Mystery. With love in his heart, Nanak returned to Bharata,—returned to his mission among the sons and daughters of the motherland.

For twenty-five years and more, the great Teacher travelled, from place to place, preaching and singing the Name of the One God of all nations, of all religions and races.

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The *Nama*,—the Name, the Holy Name,—he preached. The Name of God refers to all that is revealed of God,—the "character" of God. Guru Nanak revealed God's character in his life and in the opening section of the *Jap Saheb* :—"*Eko Onkar.*" "He is One!"

Jesus taught in his "prayer" that He is the "One Father." "Hallowed be His Name!" St. Bernard taught that the "Name" was "Light." St. Peter, invoking the aid of the "Name,"—*Nama*,—cured a man who was lame. Peter uttered the "Name," and illumined some who were spiritually blind. He said to the lame :—"In the Name of Jesus, arise and walk!"

The Islamic Name, "Allah," means "He who is worthy to be adored!"

Singing releases powerful vibrations: they are silent forces. Arjuna met Bhishma on the battle-field, lying on a bed of arrows,—reciting *Rama Nama.*

Singing *Rama Nama* and serving the poor and lonely is, verily, the secret of the true life,—the life beautiful.

When Guru Nanak came back to Kartarpur and stayed there, cultivating his farm, holding *satsang*, every morn and every night, and mingling with the poor, simple folk, who travelled to him from neighbouring villages, he asked his disciples to sing the Name in the *kirtan.* At Kartarpur, the Sikhs cultivated the farm singing *Nama*, the Name of God.

Nanak's group worshipped God without pomp, without show, amid the silence of nature. And they, like their great leader, the Guru, served the poor. Kartarpur radiated selflessness. Guru Nanak was a picutre of humility: and his comrades, in a spirit of true discipleship, worked as humble servants of the poor. From Kartarpur spread the fire of a new love of God and man all over the Punjab. Guru Nanak's face shone with the simplicity and peace of a saint who was, also, a labourer, a toiler, a servant of

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the poor and lowly. Work and worship, love and labour, silence and song were blended together in the life at Kartarpur.

It was the year of grace 1539, when, in the holy colony of Kartarpur, Guru Nanak prepared to depart. Bright was the day and beautiful the hour, when he, who was the brother of life and the brother of death, the brother of all humanity and the brother of all creation, passed away. The smile, the light from within, that shone in his face, went not out in the hour of his departure.

Nanak's influence has not waned but has grown as centuries have gone. Nanak is, today, a flaming symbol. He founded no sect: he revered all religions. He taught no creed: he preached love and noble deed. He proclaimed that all the people were the people of God. In all castes he saw the one sacred Brotherhood of Humanity. In all the nations he beheld the procession of the one Race of Love,—the one Race of Humanity. To all countries and to all peoples he sang the song of *Nama*. Therefore, as his disciple, Bhai Gurdas, sang :—"Humanity resounds with his hymns, and he makes our hearts gardens of love and peace: and rivers flow in us, singing his songs." Therefore has Nanak a throne in the hearts of men. His teaching is a Song of the Immortals. And this Farmer has planted, in many aspiring hearts, the seed of a new faith, a new vision, a new life. As a disciple of the great Guru sings :— "The seed is of God and the seed is growing!"

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NANAK's love and humility inspired his disciples with boundless affection. They spread his message, far and wide, in the North. They purified the life of the Punjab. They built a new brotherhood of the strong and they gave a new hope, a new faith, a new life to the Hindus of Muslim Sind. Nanak became the beloved of the Hindus in that province. Scattered, today, in different parts of India,—homeless exiles,—they still are attached to the name and person of Nanak. They still love him with a love, as pure as it is profound.

Nanak infused a new spirit in the North and in Sind. South India knows him not: and the Western world knows him not. The West, broken and bleeding, needs, as never before, the message of Nanak's life and Nanak's gospel of love. Who will take the message to the nations of the world?

Nanak saw the world's deep tragedy. He saw the world caught in a net of suffering and woe. He saw the agony of the earth,—its travail and pain. He saw the anguish of India, oppressed by dark forces, trampled upon by conflicts of creeds and dark deeds. And he prayed for God's grace to "save the world in agony." "Raise all unto Thee," he cried, "raise them whichever way they may be raised!" And he taught that "the *Nama*, the *Sat Nama*, the Word of God" was the cure of all the ills of "suffering humanity." The "Word of God," the "*Sat Nama*," singeth in the heart of him who strives to be pure. "Be pure," said the Guru, "that Truth may be realised."

The pure spirit of religion was incarnated in this apostle of humility and love. Year after year hath he come nearer

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to me, and he hath enkindled in my heart a love, which adores him as one of the world's truly great ones, who attained to surpassing greatness, because they were "great" as they were "pure." Nanak breathes on his *bhaktas* a breath, a benediction of the Eternal. Nanak thrills us with his "naturalness." Nanak needs no legends of a superhuman world. The beauty of his simple, humble life lures us on to his vision of the Infinite. No miraculous legends need embellish his life. He is so natural, so human. Therefore, he shines with a beauty divine!

It was a privileged epoch in which India could produce two such inspired and illuminated geniuses as Nanak and Kabir. It was a divine hour in India's history. How many hidden forces came to a head in Nanak as in Kabir!

Nanak was farmer: Kabir was a weaver. Each was so simple, so humble. Each adored the one Eternal God in all. "There is no Hindu and there is no Muslim," said Nanak. Kabir called himself "a child of Rama and Allah." Each sang the one Divine Name. "O God!" said Kabir, "whether Allah or Rama, I live by Thy Name!" Each asked his countrymen to turn away from the outer religion of rites and ceremonies to the inner religion of the heart.

Guru Nanak preached a Faith which adored the one God,—the *Karta Purukh*, the Supreme Person, who is the Creator of all. Guru Nanak pointed out that purification was from within, not in temple-rites and pilgrimages to holy places. And Guru Nanak adored the one God whom idols and the images of God could not reach. "Lifeless," said Kabir, "are all the images of the Gods : they cannot speak! I know it, for I have called aloud to them." And again :—"What avails it to wash your mouth and count your beads and bathe in holy streams and bow in temples, if deceitfulness is in your hearts?"

Nanak, like Kabir, had no dogmas. Each bore witness

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to the One Name, and purity in thought and word and deed, and service of the poor. Nanak spoke of God as the One beyond conception and speech,—the Formless One,—in whose presence the mind is still, the tongue is speechless, the heart is dumb. And Kabir sang:—

There be a world beyond all bounds,
Brother! And there is a Being
Whom no name may name aright,
Of whom the best we can say
Is that nothing can be said.
No form, no body, no length, no breath
Hath He: He is. But how can I describe It?
The words of the mouth tell of It, naught!
The letters on paper,—write of It, naught!

Both Nanak and Kabir asked the seeker to look for the Light within. "Wanderers are they," says Nanak, "who seek Him abroad." And Kabir says :—

The Real is in your home within!
Why wander you from forest to forest?
Go where you will, to Kasi or to Mathura,
You will not find Him
Except in your soul within!

Both Kabir and Nanak were mystics of the purest ray serene. Both were prophets of the "Inner Life," and both urged that the "Inner" should be expressed, not in creeds, dogmas, rites and ceremonies, but in humble service of the poor and lowly. And service of the poor must be inspired by love of God and of *Nama*, the Word of God. Nanak sings :—

O man! how canst thou be free without love?
And the Word of God,—the Nama,—

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Will reveal to thee the Lord within thee,
And grant thee treasures of love.

Love-filled, the seeker becometh a bride of the Lord. Nanak says :—

Let the disciple become the Bridegroom's bride !
Filled with bhakti, let the disciple be dyed
In the true colour of Love.
Such a bride shall never be a widow :
For she abideth in the Sat Guru :
On her forehead is the jewel of Love :
And without the Bridegroom she knoweth none.

Awake ! Awake ! O seeker, awake !
Renounce the little wisdom of thy "ego" :
Love-filled, think ever of His Lotus-Feet !
Do as He biddeth thee to do :
Surrender thy body and thy soul to Him :
Surrender thyself :
So mayst thou meet thy Lord !

Absorbed in the Lord of Love, the disciple will grow in meditation of the Word of God. This meditation is *japa*,—the *mantra*,—which involves the eight-fold exercise or *sadhana* :—(1) purity of body and mind; (2) silence; (3) concentration of mind; (4) realisation of the meaning of the *mantra*; (5) patience and contentment; (6) faith and reverence; (7) *satsang* which is *sant-sang*, fellowship with pure and holy ones; (8) *living* the *mantra* in daily life. "May I be a kokil-bird," says the Guru, "living in the mango-grove and singing the notes of meditation; so may I meet my Master!"

Without this "meditation," *tapasya* and good deeds are fruitless. Such deeds do but lead the seeker astray from the Path. The seeker, whose mind and heart meditate on the Word of God, is a *gurmukh*. But he, whose mind and

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heart wander away from the Lord, is a *manmukh* : he may do many benevolent deeds, but him the Gùru calls a *sakat*. He is a "smoked vessel." His company "soils," gives a "stain" to the seeker.

In both, Kabir and Nanak, the spirit of history kindled a celestial fire. Both bore witness to an Eternity that dwells in the heart within,—an Eternity, a Divinity, that is the destiny of every man,—if he will but develop his heroic will, renouncing the littleness of self-love or the "ego."

Kabir and Nanak,—both sang of love. Kabir found his interpreter to the West in Tagore. Nanak awaits his interpreters,—apostles of humility and love. They will thrill the world with the story of a man who renounced the joys of this world to live alone for his Father,—the *Akala Purukha*,—the Father of all creation.

The tale of Guru Nanak, re-told in simple terms as that of a man amongst men, of one who was, and still is, our Brother, our Elder Brother, a Leader of our pilgrim-band to the Eternal Shrine, will move multitudes in East and West to tears that will purify the nations. And his message, re-interpreted in terms of modern consciousness, will awaken in the best minds and hearts of Asia and of the West a vision of the Infinite that will bring together both science and religion in worship of the One Mystery that no man may know,—the One Life that breathes its benediction on the path-ways of Nature and the procession of history through the ages.

Nanak was a creator of an epoch in Indian history. Other creators yet may come in the unfoldings of time. But Nanak's humility will not, I believe, be surpassed. And when India comes back to her own and is truly a Free State,—not an imitation "secular state,"—the sons and daughters of the motherland will renew their youth in reverence for Nanak as one of the noblest of inspired geniuses in the history of Man.

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